

could be reared to those who had devoted themselves to the service of the church, than the tapering "cross," which was so lavishly employed on similar occasions during the middle ages? A noble example has been set by the Oxford men, in the erection of that splendid work of art, the Martyrs' Memorial, which we trust ere long will be followed wherever any thing of like nature be required.

Another modern example of the monumental or mortuary cross stands on an eminence near Sheffield, over the bodies of 400 victims of the cholera in 1832. The foundation stone was laid two years afterwards by the poet Montgomery, a man very unlikely to countenance or in any way advance superstition. If, then, a cross be raised, and by such a man, on the grave of many, what may hinder it being placed on that of one? The doctrine of prayer for the soul, with which the sepulchral cross was intimately connected when disused, has now generally exploded, and few if any would be led to adopt it merely through beholding the Christians' grave surmounted by the cross of Christ—the emblem of his salvation. Hearne, the antiquary, was a great advocate for the use of this figure on tombs, as his following words witness:—"Twas from the Jews adorning the monuments of their heroes with military instruments, that even the Christians put up pennis and other emblems of honour in churches, though the most common (and, indeed, the most honourable) banner on our monuments before the dissolution of religious houses, was a cross, which, however, since that time hath been generally discontinued as popish and superstitious; and why yet more popish and superstitious in this case than to sign infants with the cross at baptism, which is still practised (and that very laudably) amongst us? Methinks Cranmer's monument, by Balliol College, had been never a whit the less honourable had a cross been put on it, such a one as we see on some old (though otherwise very plain) stones in some churchyards; especially as he is allowed to have been a martyr, and to have died for the true Christian religion." How it would have rejoiced the heart of the honest antiquary to have seen his wish in some sense verified by the erection of the Martyrs' Memorial! To a Christian eye it would be much more pleasing to behold the wooded summit crowned with massive crosses, in the stead of those square obelisks and jubilee columns placed there in commemoration of joyful events, the former would at once record the event, and speak thankfulness for mercies conferred. For sanctuary and boundaries it is no longer required, but we are happy to see that it is again mounting the gables of our religious edifices, and in primitive simplicity crowning our altars, never more, we trust, to be expunged by fanatical violence.

P. P.

Manchester, June 30th, 1843.

HISTORY OF LABOUR IN THE BUILDING CRAFTS.

(Continued from No. 20.)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—Before I proceed further with details incident to my subject, I must be permitted to revert to the very important effects produced by the institution of GUILDS. This most ancient protective feature of trade and commerce is as old as the palmist days of our Saxon forefathers, their standard of union unfurled a thousand years ago, and which will again, if I err not in my judgment, become the rallying point for vast bodies of artisans now without concert, other than that of the feeble, inert, and disconnected trade unions of the day. The influence of Guilds resulted from the development of a principle effective in resisting pressure from without, by a concentration of similar interests within a circle hallowed by the respect and confidence of all who entered it; a principle sustained by, and sustaining its constituents; watchful through chivalries of eyes and ears, and jealous of that self-respect which it forbore to infringe in others.

The term *Guild, Gild, or Geld*, signified, literally, a payment. In times of vassalage it denoted a free borough, or enfranchised district; and in this sense I take it to have implied an aggregate sum raised by concert of the inhabitants, and paid over to the nominal lord or feudatory, in lieu and satisfaction of a previous claim to personal service of whatever kind; in the case of societies, or congregations of trades, a contribution of like nature, but for purposes tending to the maintenance of particular privileges enjoyed by grant, acquired by usage, or contended for. The earliest Guilds were undoubtedly those of districts, for co-operation of a general kind, stimulated by free tenure of the soil, was already active ere trade and commerce had acquired strength.

London, the seat of royalty, with its noble river, affording navigable access by an estuary opposite the shores of the Continent, affords, if not the most ancient, yet the best authenticated instances of

trading co-operation under the title and government of Guilds; of these the steel-yard merchants, a great mercantile community, but composed of foreigners, principally Germans, or, as they were then termed, *Easterlings*, was the first in importance, and probably so with the single exception of the woollen weavers in point of date. The steel-yard merchants were recognized by charters and encouraged by successive sovereigns; and so consolidated was their union, that they accomplished a monopoly of nearly all the commerce of the kingdom: Seated upon the city bank of the Thames at Dowgate, they erected massive stacks of building, comprising their warehouses and residences, for in those times of peril and liability to sudden attacks from depredators, they dwelt together, forming a compact body, whether for trading operations or defence; on the land side they had an outward wall of circumvallation; towards the river their extensive quays and water-gate. Always in communication, by means of their own shipping, with the Continent, they were not only useful but necessary to the ruling power, the most important intelligence being alternately conveyed and obtained through their medium. The whole of this great and exemplary establishment was under the control of a principal or alderman, and an elected council, whose decisions were final upon all points connected with its undertakings and management.

The flourishing state of the *Easterlings* was not unheeded by the native citizens of London; numerous Guilds were formed by the leading trades, which, successful in every instance, became parent establishments of the existing city companies. Similar policy was soon adopted by the less opulent handicraft trades, and there was scarcely any without its Guild. Among all these the Free-Masons certainly had priority of existence, but they were not, at any period of our history, a stationary body: domestic architecture was little cultivated; towns grew up but slowly, and their talent, tastes, and habits were more suited to great undertakings; the massive and the magnificent were realizations of the studies and labours which they prosecuted, and of which we have remaining evidences in every province of the kingdom. The older chroniclers repeatedly mention this associated brotherhood under the term *Gild*. "English and foreigners," says Gervaise, of Canterbury, "travelled in Gilds, being skilful artificers in stone and wood-work, for the purpose of building," and it is remarkable that whatever may have been the state of the particular district in which they wrought, neither dissension nor open feud presumed to interrupt their march, or interrupt their progress. Under their hands temples worthy of dedication to sacred purposes and an undivided faith arose throughout the land, for in those days men had at least one object which all concurred to reverence. It is always with regret that I find the notices of these distinguished workmen, which appear in most historical records, limited to mere incident. This may perhaps be, in a great measure, owing to the self-government of their communities and itinerant habits; the building upon which they were employed once completed, they departed, leaving no traces save the work itself.

The Guilds of London grew to importance; they were so not only individually, but the principle of union which pervaded them was favourable to the support of the municipal government of the city; true it is, that jealousies, and even outbreaks occurred, but they were merely ebullitions of the forward and thoughtless, and speedily corrected by willing submission to the rule of their own constituted authorities. An administration of the kindly office alternately favouring particular interests has, however, long since crumbled down the ancient system of Guilds; in lieu of it, and together with great wealth, the principal city Guilds bear the appellation of companies, while minor and less aristocratic associations of the same kind have disappeared; there is nevertheless in the plan of the old institutions much worthy of imitation on the part of the working classes of the present day; union of interests and means for great moral purposes, protection of indefeasible rights, and well-timed expression of the general sentiment. If we scan the political horizon, much is seen, and more heard, of great combinations, having for their object certain changes, to be carried by a *coup de main*. The great game of agitation is relied upon to effect these purposes; it is, however, a feature in which the industrious portion of the community should be cautious of mixing themselves up, to avoid, in fact, being made the tools of party, or of the personal exaltation of individuals. There are direct objects connected with the well-being of handicraft labour, which require anxious deliberation. To these our attention should first be turned, leaving the graver description of political questions to be influenced, as they would be, by the steady attitude and unswerving determination that especially characterized the old Guilds.

The history of labour is one of struggle; first, for emancipation, and subsequently, through all its

stages, for the preservation of acquired rights, together with a fair rate of wages. We have seen that in 1349 stringent laws were passed, fixing a price far below its value, and the injustice of them will appear more, still more odious, when the then state of the country with respect to bread-corn is pointed out. Never, perhaps, were fluctuations in the price of that article so severe, or rather fearful; imperfect cultivation of the soil furnished at best but scanty harvests; there was no storing of corn, excepting in the granges of the great abbots, and generally the produce was consumed before the natural periods of reproduction came round; thus the old historian Stow informs us that, in 1317, wheat had risen to the enormous price of 41. per quarter! but after harvest fell to 6s. 8d. Now, as little could have been done towards the improvement of agriculture, or in the storing of corn, between 1317 and 1349, when the Act fixing wages came into force, the workman with his 4d. per diem was exposed to a variation in the price of wheat of from 10s. to 10d. per bushel. But to take the precise period when the wages laws pressed heaviest, or between 1350 and 1400, we find the price of wheat to have been from 1s. to 26s. per quarter, a variation which, though not so great as in antecedent times, is sufficiently so to brand those laws as in the highest degree oppressive. Neither did the legislature stop at wages; the diet of tradesmen and labourers when supplied with food by their employers was specified, and the price of their clothing marked at per yard; an Act of 1363 ordained "That the servants of lords, artificers, and tradesmen should be served once a day with meat, or fish, and the offer of other victuals, as milk, cheese, &c., according to their station; and that they should wear cloth of two marks' price" (about 12d. per yard).

At this distance of time the injustice of these laws is manifest, and the prevailing ignorance of the principles of trade extraordinary. Governments, indeed, have always been slow in developing right energies, still interference on the small scale has been gradually ceasing, and is being compensated by the favourite centralization systems closing around us. It is, however, time, Mr. Editor, that I should conclude this portion of my communications, which I will do by quoting a passage from the apostle of modern political economy, Adam Smith, on the interference of governments; he addressed himself to sumptuary laws, but we may consistently extend its applicability:—"It is the highest impertinence in kings and ministers to pretend to watch over the economy of private people, and to restrain their expenses by sumptuary laws, or by prohibiting the importation of foreign luxuries. They are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in society; let them look well after their own expenses, and they may safely trust private persons to do the same; if their own extravagance does not ruin the state, that of their subjects never will."

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(To be continued.)

MR. WARD'S MODEL FARM-HOUSE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—My former letter was not written under the expectation of its being made the subject of attack in a leading article of your paper, particularly as you have been over liberal in your comments without the text; and had it not have been for our friend ("the Farmer," and probably some others) there is little doubt I should have been brought out as what you are disposed to call "a whipping-boy."

Now, Mr. Editor, I wish to know (as one of your subscribers) if we are to consider you as our servant, or if we are to be tools in your hands by allowing you to publish every "Grub-street" subject brought before you, and that without giving it the least attention as to its merits or otherwise. Had you have done by Mr. Ward's "model farm-house" as you did by Mr. Fitteroff's muddy subject, your readers (no doubt) would have felt some satisfaction in discovering your attention to such matter before giving it insertion; as I cannot but observe that in addition to my former remarks and those of "the Farmer," that the general internal arrangement is as bad as it can possibly be; there is the kitchen fire-place between two doorways, and that of the parlour as close to the door as it is possible to place it, occasioning great inconvenience and want of comfort, for every time the door is opened it must come in contact with the chair of the person sitting on that side of the fire-place; besides which, it would be placing them in a line with two doorways and the parlour window, creating such a current of air that it would be one of the most uncomfortable situations imaginable. There are a few additional objections which strengthen my opinion in differing with you that Mr. Ward should be proud of such a son (admitting it to be the son who was our contributor), i.e. in this capacity, for instead of